

**ROLLING HILLS
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE**

NEWS

**ROLLING HILLS
ELECTRIC CO-OP, INC.**

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STAFF

Tom Ruth
Interim CEO/General Manager

CONTACT US

3075B U.S. Hwy. 24
P.O. Box 339
Beloit, KS 67420
785-534-1601 or 800-530-5572

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energy efficiency tips and
cooperative news.

Rolling Hills Electric Cooperative Names Tom Ruth as Interim CEO/GM

The Rolling Hills Electric Cooperative Board of Trustees is proud to announce **TOM RUTH** as interim CEO/general manager, effective Jan. 5, 2026.

Tom is a graduate of the University of Missouri-Rolla and a professional electrical engineer with 50 years of experience across electric utility field operations, business operations, construction, safety, communications, electronic communications, and engineering. He has also served on several non-profit boards and is a veteran of the U.S. Coast Guard.

Tom describes himself simply as “just Tom,” an old lineman committed to doing what’s best for all stakeholders. He believes everyone is important and valued, regardless of their position. “We all perform different tasks, but no one is better than anyone else,” he says. “It takes everyone in a small cooperative to make it work and provide exemplary service to our members.”

Tom emphasizes the importance of developing and mentoring people to ensure both personal and organizational success. While members always come first, he notes that taking care of the

people within the organization is essential to fulfilling that mission. Safety is paramount: Rolling Hills maintains a strong safety culture that is risk-averse rather than risk-accepting.

“Nothing is more important than ensuring the good people of Rolling Hills go home to their families every night,” Tom says.

Tom will continue to oversee RHEC’s day-to-day operations as CEO while the board begins a national search for a permanent CEO/general manager. The board has engaged GreatCo-Ops to assist with this process. GreatCo-Ops is a team of experienced electric cooperative leaders, consultants, and researchers dedicated to helping co-ops succeed. Their team will work closely with RHEC management and the board of directors throughout the search until a permanent CEO/General Manager is selected.



Tom Ruth



Employee Updates

Join us in celebrating professional changes for our employees

JADEN ATWOOD has completed RHEC's Lineman Apprenticeship Program and has been promoted to journeyman lineman. The program is designed to be completed over 4 years and requires completing workbook assignments, passing 40 written tests, as well as several skills tests, successful evaluations, and thousands of hours of on-the-job training.

Jaden first joined RHEC as an intern after attending Pratt Community College for electrical power technology. Impressed by Jaden's drive and potential, RHEC welcomed Jaden as a full-time apprentice lineman the following year.

CHEERS TO YOU, JADEN!

RYAN LIVELY is a new journeyman lineman for our Ellsworth Outpost.

- ▶ **HOMETOWN:** Norton, Kansas
- ▶ **SCHOOL:** Pratt Community College
- ▶ **HOBBIES:** Waterfowl hunting and attending rodeos



Jaden Atwood



Ryan Lively



Jason Manton

JASON MANTON joined our Belleville outpost with 27 years of on-the-job experience as a lineworker.

- ▶ **HOMETOWN:** Brandon, Mississippi
- ▶ **SCHOOL:** Line School certificate
- ▶ **HOBBIES:** Barbecue grilling, local dirt tracks, and spending time with family

CASEY SMITH, journeyman lineman, transferred to one of our sister cooperatives, Butler Electric Cooperative in El Dorado.

HUDSON SMITH, journeyman lineman, transferred from our Ellsworth Outpost to our Beloit Headquarters.



Casey Smith



Hudson Smith

Struggling With Winter Bills? LIEAP Can Help — Apply Starting Jan 20.

Rolling Hills Electric receives requests for assistance with member electricity bills throughout the year. The Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) is a federally funded program that helps eligible households pay a portion of their home energy costs by providing a one-time per year benefit.

THE 2026 LIEAP APPLICATION PERIOD IS FROM JAN. 20, 2026, THROUGH MARCH 31, 2026, BY 5 P.M. To qualify, applicants must meet the following requirements:

- ▶ An adult living at the address must be personally responsible for paying the heating costs incurred at the current residence, payable either to the landlord or the fuel vendor.
- ▶ Applicants must demonstrate a recent history of payments toward purchases of the primary heating energy.
- ▶ The combined gross income (before deductions) of all persons living at the address may not exceed 150% of the federal poverty level according to the guidelines listed in the table.

THE BENEFIT LEVELS VARY ACCORDING TO THE FOLLOWING FACTORS:

- ▶ Household income.
- ▶ Type of dwelling.
- ▶ Number of persons living at the address.
- ▶ Type of heating fuel.

2026 INCOME ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES

Persons Living at Address	Maximum Gross Monthly Income	Persons Living at Address	Maximum Gross Monthly Income
1	\$1,956	5	\$4,706
2	\$2,644	6	\$5,394
3	\$3,331	7	\$6,081
4	\$4,019	8	\$6,769
+1	\$688 for each additional person		

For more information and to apply, visit WWW.DCF.KS.GOV, select the **ASSISTANCE & SERVICES**, then **UTILITIES & ENERGY ASSISTANCE**. Applications must be received at the DCF office prior to 5 p.m., **MARCH 31, 2026**. Late arrivals will not be considered for assistance. The state will contact Rolling Hills Electric to verify payments are being made on the account and the account is active in the applicant's name. LIEAP payments will come directly to Rolling Hills Electric and be applied directly to the account.

For more information or assistance in completing the application, please contact the LIEAP office at 888-369-4777.

Water Heater and Heat Pump Rebates

RHEC made the decision in 2023 to discontinue offering Rheem Marathon water heaters and all related parts. However, the retailers listed below continue to offer water heaters and replacement parts.

- ▶ Border States, 1320 Armory Road, Salina, KS 67401; 785-826-1852
- ▶ Home Depot
- ▶ Menards
- ▶ Local Plumbing & HVAC companies

RHEC CONTINUES TO OFFER REBATES

Rebates are available for qualifying electric water heaters and heat pumps. After installation, please contact Rolling Hills Electric to submit your rebate request. An inspection by an RHEC technician is required.

REBATE AMOUNTS

WATER HEATERS

- ▶ Standard Water Heater: \$175
- ▶ Lifetime Water Heater: \$325

AIR-SOURCE HEAT PUMP

- ▶ \$150 per ton 14.3 SEER2
- ▶ \$200 per ton 15.2 SEER2
- ▶ \$250 per ton 16 SEER2 and above

GEOTHERMAL HEAT PUMP

- ▶ \$300 per ton (minimum efficiency requirement)
- ▶ Closed Loop = 3.3 COP, 14.1 EER
- ▶ Open Loop = 3.6 COP, 16.2 EER

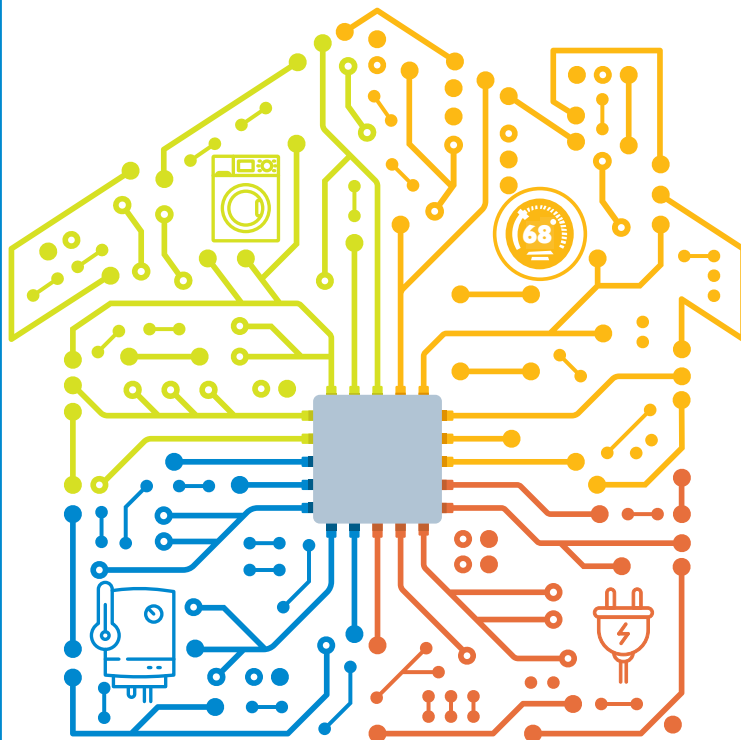
Contact RHEC at 785-534-1601 for more information and details on the rebate program.

STATEMENT OF NONDISCRIMINATION

ROLLING HILLS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PROVIDER AND EMPLOYER.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call 866-632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or (2) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

POWER UNDER PRESSURE



Four Ways to Ease Grid Strain This Winter

Energy use spikes during periods of extremely cold weather, which adds strain to the electric grid. When our community works together to reduce energy use, we can make a big impact in supporting reliability.

Here are four simple ways you can help:

Delay using large appliances. Run them in the evenings or midday when demand is lower.

Lower your thermostat. Even a difference of a few degrees can help.

Lower your water heater to 120 degrees avoid back-to-back showers.

Unplug unnecessary devices. Electronics and lighting add up. Unplug any unused items.

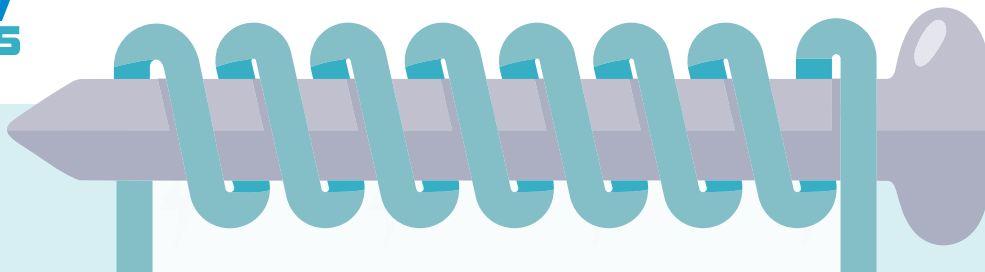
SOURCE: NATIONAL RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION



**Energy
Explorers**

POP QUIZ ELECTRICITY TERMS

How well do you know terms related to electricity? Test your knowledge! **Read the definitions below. Then, look at the word bank to match the correct terms to the definitions.** You can only use the words once, so choose carefully. Check your work in the answer key.



WORD BANK

Conductor

Circuit

Insulator

Volt (Voltage)

Static Electricity

1. A complete path that electricity flows through.

2. Something that allows electricity to pass through, such as metal or wire.

3. The standard unit of measurement for electricity.

4. Something that does not allow electricity to pass through easily, such as rubber.

5. Electricity build-up caused by rubbing two surfaces together.



Answer Key:
1. Circuit
2. Conductor
3. Volt (Voltage)
4. Insulator
5. Static Electricity